1756, December 14.

A

PROLOGUE

TO THE

LONG EXPECTED

TRAGEDY of DOUGLAS,

As it is to be acted this evening at the theatre in the head of the Canongate, Edinburgh.

FORETOLD by * C——LE, now the time is come,
When Scotia bears the palm from Greece and Rome;
When the *learned youth*, wits of the preſent age,
No more need form their taſte on the tranſlated page;
When *beaux* and *belles* old Shakeſpear ſhall deride,
And *bucks* and *bloods* caſt Rocheſter aſide;
When *Levi's ſprightly ſons* ſhall quit the chair,
And on the more inſtructive ſtage appear;
Succeſsful preachers to the youthful croud,
That all that pleaſure is is alſo good.

* The production referred to will be found in the prologue to Herminius and Aſpaſia, ſuppoſed to be wrote by the Reverend Mr C——LE.

To

To thee, great H—ME, these happy days we owe,
And such the gifts thy DOUGLAS will bestow;
DOUGLAS! who comes a thousand hearts to chear,
Who wept for * AGIS' death and fate severe.

Now shall the English curse their *Garrick*'s name,
Who banish'd DOUGLAS far from *Drury-Lane*,
Nor would thy humble earnest pray'r regard,
But void of merit the great work declar'd.

Not so *fair Ward*, she well to churchmen known,
This night in public will thy merit own;
And if some modest friends the favour claim,
Place is prepar'd for these behind the scene.

* Great were the expectations of the public from this performance of the auth
which we are told in the *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, carried dramatic poetry to t
summit of perfection; so that, had it been published, it was believed that never o
would have presumed to have wrote a tragedy after it. But, as that ingenious w
ter imagined, the knowledge of this effect, and the compassion thence arising to f
ture authors, determined the humble and benevolent theatric divine to suppres
publication:—and we are told by the advertisement in the Edinburgh Eveni
Courant, that the same humble and self-denied temper had almost smothered t
present production, even after the two journeys the author made to London, a
solicitations to Mr Garrick to receive it.

AN

EPILOGUE

TO THE

TRAGEDY of DOUGLAS.

Spoke by the AUTHOR.

THROUDED in glory, and with praiſe full blown,
Permit your *Bard* his gratitude to own.
To mine *immortal genius* firſt I bow;
And next, *great ſquire*, my thanks are paid to you;
By your example and kind precept warn'd,
No * heavy moral has my plot deform'd:
My ſignal too did teach the thoughtleſs croud,
When fit to weep, and when to clap aloud.
C——LE and C——PLES, all the favourite tribe
Who on our Zion's top triumphant ride,

* This ought for ever to ſilence thoſe ſhallow critics, who have ſtated it as an objection againſt this play, that one is at a loſs to know what moral ſentiment it is deſigned to inſpire.——According to the true ſenſe of the word *moral*, as accurately defined by ſome late writers, many highly moral ſentences might be quoted from it; ſuch as the beautiful adjuration uſed by one of the ſpeakers, who is introduced, ſwearing, *By him that died on the accurſed tree to ſave mankind*;—and the ſublime exclamation put in the mouth of another when juſt expiring, *I'll riſe eternal fire.*

My

My thanks receive; nor fear the * bigots frown:
Perſiſt, and Edin's ſtipends are your own.
O happy Edin! who ere long ſhall ſee
Each pulpit fill'd by ſuch bright wits as we.
Permit me next, great J—G—s of the land,
Who grace my audience, and reſpect command,
To bow obeiſance: What tho' the laws controul
The ſtage? you ſcorn the antiquated rule.
To yonder box, where ſits a humble throng,
Some gratitude and thanks muſt ſure belong;
They are my flock, from † A—NF—D they come,
And ſtand around their paſtor as a crown.
How warm my heart to every *beau* and *belle*,
Ere long my muſe to the dull world ſhall tell.
To thank thee, *Ward*, ſurpaſſes all my art,
W——N and J——N, bear a friendly part;
For tho' ſhe lately died Lord Barnard's wife,
Your preſence ſoon will quicken her to life.
And now in fame's loud horn each name ſhall riſe,
Who owns your Bard, and joins his works to prize.——

* This refers to that horrid inſult offered by the preſbytery of Edinburgh Wedneſday to wit and genius, by ordering letters to be writ to the different byteries to which thoſe miniſters belong, who honoured the playhouſe with company on this occaſion.

† The author ſent a number of tickets to his pariſhioners, who came in a b to the houſe, and entered ſo much into the ſpirit of tragedy, that when met i evening they could ſcarce part without blows.